

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ROME 18535 01 OF 02 191053Z

11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

/060 W

----- 097023

R 190950Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4829

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 18535/1

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: ZACCAGNINI'S VIEWS ON ITALIAN POLITICAL ISSUES

REF: ROME 13863

1. BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI, DC PARTY SECRETARY AND HIS ASSISTANT GUIDO BODRATO MET WITH AMBASSADOR AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR DECEMBER 17. FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST EMERGED FROM MEETING:

2. SOCIALISTS: (PSI); IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, ZACCAGNINI SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT PSI WOULD ATTEMPT TO PRECIPITATE GOVERNMENT CRISIS UNTIL AFTER BOTH PSI AND DC PARTY CONGRESSES IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH. FURTHER, HE IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT PSI WILL IN FACT TRY TO CREATE CRISIS BECAUSE OF INTERNAL DISSENSION. IF THEY DO, MOTIVATION WILL PROBABLY BE DESIRE FOR EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF ANTICIPATED GAINS. HOWEVER, ZACCAGNINI DOES NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT PSI MIGHT BE WILLING TO FOREGO EARLY ELECTIONS AND RE-ENTER GOVERNMENT IF THEY WERE GIVEN SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF IMPORTANT MINISTRIES AND SOME PROGRAM COMMITMENTS. CLEARLY ZACCAGNINI HAS NOT CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT UNDESIRABILITY OF EARLY ELECTIONS.

3. DE MARTINO VISIT: DISCUSSION OF SOCIALISTS LED TO SUBJECT OF DE MARTINO VISIT. ZACCAGNINI AGAIN EXPRESSED VIEW THAT INVITATION AN EXCELLENT IDEA. HE, LIKE ALL OTHER CHRISTIAN DEMO-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ROME 18535 01 OF 02 191053Z

CRATS, IS VERY WORRIED ABOUT SOCIALISTS AND THEIR PREDISPOSITION

TO TRY TO KEEP ONE FOOT IN EACH CAMP. HE VERY MUCH HOPES THAT DE MARTINO'S VISIT TO THE US AND SOME STRAIGHT TALK FROM USG OFFICIALS WILL ENCOURAGE HIM TO SEE THAT COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) IS NOT GOOD FOR THE PSI OR FOR THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN ITALY. IN TALKING ABOUT DE MARTINO, ZACCAGNINI OBSERVED THAT HE HAS A RATHER CLOSED PERSONALITY, IS A SOLITARY MAN, AND TENDS TO BE FATALISTIC (AMONG OTHER THINGS, ABOUT PCI ENTRY INTO ITALIAN GOVERNMENT). HE ALSO OBSERVED THAT DE MARTINO, LIKE OTHER MEN, RESPONDS TO FLATTERY AND HAS PERSONAL AMBITIONS (TO BE PRESIDENT OF ITALY). ONE GETS ALONG BEST WITH DE MARTINO, HE SAID, IF ONE SPEAKS FRANKLY AND DIRECTLY, BUT "NOT BRUTALLY". COMMENT: COINCIDENTALLY WE GOT VERY SIMILAR COMMENTS ON SAME DAY FROM SEN. BARTOLEMI (DC).

4. PUBLIC RELATIONS: THE AMBASSADOR COMPLIMENTED ZACCAGNINI ON HIS RECENT INTERVIEW WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS. ZACCAGNINI REPLIED SAYING THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO DO IT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR URGINGS TO THE DC TO IMPROVE ITS PUBLIC RELATIONS. BODRATO ADDED THAT, IN RESPONSE TO OUR URGINGS, THEY HAD ALSO SOUGHT TO REORGANIZE AND IMPROVE THEIR PRESS RELATIONS OFFICE SO AS TO BE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO AND PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE TO THE PRESS. THIS LED TO A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE NEED FOR A BETTER PROPAGANDA EFFORT AND A WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE EMBASSY IN THIS FIELD. SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED WAS THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE FACTS ON COMMUNIST ADMINISTRATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND TO GET A MORE BALANCED STORY PUBLISHED IN THE ITALIAN AND FOREIGN PRESS. IN THIS CONNECTION, AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT US MIGHT ALSO BE ABLE TO BE HELPFUL TO THE DC IN TERMS OF PROVIDING ITS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN STAFF AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE LATEST CAMPAIGN TECHNIQUES (INCLUDING PUBLIC RELATIONS) IN THE US. ZACCAGNINI EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN THIS BUT SAID THAT IT WOULD BEST WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE DC CONGRESS WHICH WOULD DETERMINE WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION CAMPAIGN. MEANTIME, HE URGED THAT WE BE IN TOUCH WITH SIGNORELLO, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE ROME CAMPAIGN. WE TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE ALREADY IN TOUCH.

5. DC RENEWAL: AMBASSADOR REPEATED, ON BASIS OF HIS CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON, USG'S INTEREST IN DC RENEWAL AND OUR CONCERN ABOUT ITS ABILITY TO WAGE AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ROME 18535 01 OF 02 191053Z

THE PCI. HE ALSO STRESSED OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE PSYCHOLOGICALLY OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS NEXT SPRING. ZACCAGNINI SAID HE UNDERSTANDS USG CONCERN AND APPRECIATED OUR INTEREST. HE SAID PROCESS OF RENEWAL IS PROCEEDING, ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE ACTIVITY IS BENEATH THE SURFACE FOR THE MOMENT. THE REAL TEST OF HOW MUCH THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED, HE SAID, WILL BE SEEN IN THE RESULTS OF THE DC REGIONAL CONGRESSES IN FEBRUARY (WHERE DELEGATES TO NATIONAL CONGRESS IN MARCH WILL BE ELECTED).

THOSE RESULTS WILL SHOW WHETHER OLD FACTIONS ARE BEING BROKEN DOWN AND WHETHER POLITICAL POWER OF OLD GUARD BOSSES IS BEING LIMITED. ZACCAGNINI IS OBVIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE RESULTS. HE CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. HE COMMENTED THAT THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN REESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH YOUTH (INCLUDING C & L) AND WITH MANY OF THE DISCONTENTED ELEMENTS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS. NEW FACE THAT HE HAS TRIED TO PUT ON PARTY IS PRODUCING SURPRISINGLY STRONG AND POSITIVE REACTION FROM THESE GROUPS. HE REFERRED, BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, TO HIS RECENT APPEARANCE AT A DC RALLY IN BOLOGNA WHERE, HE SAID, THEY GOT AN

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 ROME 18535 02 OF 02 191113Z

14
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

/060 W

----- 097183

R 190950Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4830

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 18535/2

ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD OF 10,000, OF WHICH APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT WERE IN THEIR TWENTIES. ZACCAGNINI FAILED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPENINGS PROVIDED BY AMBASSADOR TO COMMENT ON HIS OWN FUTURE OR THAT OF FORLANI. (COMMENT: WE ARE HEARING WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY THE IDEA THAT ZACCAGNINI SHOULD STAY ON AS SECRETARY, PRECISELY BECAUSE HE SEEMS TO PROVOKE A POSITIVE RESPONSE IN THAT PART OF THE DC ELECTORATE WHICH SEEMED SO UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PARTY BEFORE THE LAST ELECTIONS. IN ADDITION, WE ARE HEARING THAT AT THE GRASS ROOTS, I.E., AT THE PRECINCT AND TOWN LEVEL, MANY IN THE PARTY WANT HIM TO STAY ON. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT, IN MANY CASES THESE VOICES COME FROM AREAS THAT HAVE LONG BEEN DOMINATED BY OLD GUARD LEADERS OF THE PARTY WHO ARE CONSIDERABLY TO THE RIGHT OF ZACCAGNINI.)

6. PCI: IT WAS CLEAR FROM A NUMBER OF COMMENTS MADE BY ZACCAGNINI THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION THAT FIRM ANTI-COMMUNIST

LINE THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO US (REFTEL, PARA 1(A))
HAS NOT CHANGED.

7. ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE: ZACCAGNINI CHARACTERIZED AS
POSITIVE AND HELPFUL RECENT DECLARATION OF ITALIAN BISHOPS
CONFERENCE (ROME 18326). HE IS HOWEVER CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE
NEGATIVE REACTION FROM THOSE CATHOLICS WHO WILL INTERPRET
IT NOT AS A STATEMENT OF MORAL GUIDANCE BUT AS THE BEGIN-
ING OF AN ACTIVE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE
POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THIS SORT, HE BELIEVES THAT ON BALANCE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ROME 18535 02 OF 02 191113Z

EFFECT WILL BE POSITIVE AND HELPFUL TO DC.

8. COMMENT: ZACCAGNINI WAS FAR MORE RELAXED AND FORTHCOMING
THAN HE WAS AT AMBASSADOR'S LAST MEETING WITH HIM. HE SEEMED BOTH
MORE CONFIDENT OF HIMSELF IN HIS JOB AND VERY WELL- DISPOSED
TOWARD ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH US.VOLPE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME18535
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750441-0838
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751223/aaaaaugb.tel
Line Count: 191
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ROME 13863
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <05 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZACCAGNINI'S VIEWS ON ITALIAN POLITICAL ISSUES
TAGS: PINT, IT, DC, (ZACCAGNINI, BENIGNO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006